**PROTESTANT AND CATHOLIC DOCTRINE:**

The following tables compare a few of the key doctrinal issues separating the Protestants (specifically Calvinists) from the Catholics.

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| **Protestant** | **Catholic (Council of Trent)** |
| Justification by faith -- Christ's sacrifice atones for all sins, and it is only necessary to believe in it to be saved. There is nothing humans can do by their own efforts to add or detract from it. | Both faith and good works (acts of devotion, charity, the sacraments, etc.) are necessary for salvation. |
| The priesthood of all believers -- all believers have equal access to God and no other earthly intermediaries are needed. This does not mean that the flock does not need teachers, but there are no special sacramental functions belonging to any particular class. | The Catholic priesthood is necessary as only priests can perform the sacraments necessary for spirtual health and correctly interpret the meaning of scripture. |
| The scriptures are the only source of true doctrine -- studying and understanding the scriptures is therefore important to all believers. Translating the Bible into the vernacular tongues and making it available to all is essential. | Scripture is only one way in which doctrine is revealed; the decisions of Church councils, encyclicals from the Pope, tradition, etc. are all part of it. Only the priesthood of the Church can correctly interpret the meaning of scripture -- do not try this at home. |
| Christ's sacrifice happened only once, and no repeat of that sacrifice is necessary. Although Calvinists and Lutherans believe God is present at the sacrament and it nourishes the faithful spiritually, the bread and wine are not literally the body and blood of Christ. Zwinglians take a more extreme view that the sacrament is only symbolic. Everyone takes both bread and wine (or wafer and grape juice, etc.) | The Eucharist is a mystery in which the sacrifice of Christ is reenacted; the bread and wine become spiritually transformed into the true body and blood of the Lord (the doctrine of transubstantiation). |
| No heavenly intermediaries are needed to intercede with God. Although the Virgin Mary, saints, and angels are all in heaven, they should not be the objects of prayer or veneration. The making of images encourages idolatrous worship that should be directed at the more abstract concept of God. | Although the saints and angels should not be worshipped, their intercession is valuable and necessary to helping the Christian to achieve salvation. The Virgin Mary is especially honored by God, and should be also by believers. Religious images should not be worshipped, but they help to inspire devotion. |
| God's foreknowledge and omnipotence mean that everyone is predestined to their fate: either to be or not to be one of the elect. Human action avails nothing. (Now rejected by most mainline Protestant denominations). | God's omnipotence does not restrict human will, and each individual is still responsible for earning their own salvation. |
| The Bible only documents two sacraments: baptism and the Lord's Supper (so called to distinguish the Protestant practice from the Catholic Eucharist). No priestly status is required to perform them, although ministers to the church are necessary and useful to directing and guiding it. | There are seven sacraments: baptism, Eucharist, penance (confession/ absolution), confirmation, marriage, holy orders, extreme unction (last rites). Of these, baptism can be performed by anyone in an emergency, and marriage (a historical newcomer to the list) is technically bestowed by the two partners on one another -- all the rest can only be performed by a priest. |